

She speaks for the trees (and the animals, and the wetlands)

Karen Grey brings news leadership to the Wildlands Trust

Sometimes, you can have a bigger impact by moving into a smaller field.

November, Karen Grey left the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, a research organization that focuses on national and international environmental issues, for the Wildlands Trust, which is dedicated to conservation on the South Shore.

Grey succeeds Mark Primack as Executive Director of the Wildlands Trust, which (acreage numbers) in Plymouth, Bristol, Norfolk and Barnstable Counties.

Grey, who spent 17 years working at the Manomet Center, said that her interest in working on conservation matters on a more local scale is what attracted her to joining the Wildlands Trust.

"That's where big differences are made," Grey said.

One thing she brings with her from the Manomet Center is the idea of building partnerships. Conservation issues, she said, are too big for one group to handle. Grey cites the Taunton River Association, the Nature Conservancy and the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society as three groups where that sort of partnership is taking shape.

As Assistant Director of the Manomet Center, Grey said she was involved in all aspects of the

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organization's operation, on both the conservation and business sides.

"Fundraising, that's a very tricky part of it," said Grey, noting that part of her new role.

"Managing relations is an important part of my job," she said.

Making her job easier is that people, she thinks, have become "a lot more respectful" of differing opinions. She cited an example of a meeting she attended regarding the so-called 1,000 Acre parcel in Plymouth.

"Fifteen years ago, if you held that meeting there would have been much more screaming and yelling," Grey said.

Sue Chamberlain, development director of the Manomet Center, praised Grey for the "classy" publications she produced when she served as that organization's development and marketing director.

Calling her "an outside of the box" thinker, Chamberlain spoke highly of Grey's contribution to the Manomet Center and what she has to offer to the Wildlands Trust.

"She's very capable of making a decision, she's not a waffler," Chamberlain said.

And if anyone at the Wildlands Trust was concerned with getting along with the new

boss, Chamberlain noted that, at the Manomet Center, "She bonded really well with the staff."

Grey wants to increase both the Wildlands Trust's land holdings and membership.

"Too few people support us," Grey said. According to Grey, the Trust has approximately 1,000 members, while MassAudubon has that many in the region. The National

Audubon society has 600 members in Duxbury.

So far, the new Executive Director has visited Trust-owned land parcels in Duxbury, Plymouth, Pembroke and Marshfield, and plans to make the rounds on a weekly basis.

She's looking to add to that list. The Acquisitions Department is "very busy," she said, as they try to get towns to approve new conservation restrictions in the coming months.

Born in Brockton, Grey studied economics and political science at the University of Vermont before returning to the South Shore. She lives in Duxbury with her husband and three children.